

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 01748 060730Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01

SAM-01 SAJ-01 /078 W

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O R 051811Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4850

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION USEC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SP

SUBJ: VITORIA STRIKE AFTERMATH-TERRORIST ACTIONS

REF: MADRID 1709

BEGIN SUMMARY. MASSIVE FUNERAL FOR THREE PERSONS KILLED
MARCH 3 TOOK PLACE PEACEABLY IN VITORIA TODAY AMID MUCH
TENSION. ONLY SCATTERED INCIDENTS HAVE OCCURRED ELSE-WHERE,
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PAGE 02 MADRID 01748 060730Z

ALTHOUGH PAMPLONA IS SHUT DOWN BY CONTINUED STRIKE ACTIVITY.

GENERAL STRIKE HAS BEEN CONVOKED FOR MARCH 8 IN BASQUE PROVINCES, WITH POSSIBILITIES OF SOLIDARITY ACTIONS ELSEWHERE. MEANWHILE, TERRORIST ACTIONS (PROBABLY RIGHTIST) OF LAST FEW DAYS INCLUDE BEATINGS AND A NIGHT RIDE FOR EDITOR OF MAGAZINE "DOBLON", AND A LETTER BOMB WHICH FAILED TO EXPLODE RECEIVED TODAY BY MAGAZINE "CAMBIO 16." END SUMMARY.

2. THERE WAS MASSIVE TURNOUT OF SOME 10-15,000 WORKERS FOR FUNERAL MASS IN VITORIA CATHEDRAL AND SOME ESTIMATED 20-30,000 PERSONS TOOK PART IN PEACEFUL MARCH THROUGH CITY FOLLOWING MASS. TENSION WAS HIGH AND POLICE WERE READY, THOUGH REMAINING OUT OF SIGHT OF FUNERAL PARTICIPANTS. TOLL IN WEDNESDAY RIOTS AMOUNTED TO A REPORTED 88 PERSONS INJURED, AT LEAST TWO OF WHOM ARE STILL IN CRITICAL CONDITION. SIGNIFICANTLY, BOTH THE VITORIA MUNICIPAL GOVT AS WELL AS ALAVA PROVINCIAL GOVT HAVE ISSUED STATEMENT LAMENTING THE MADRID 3 TRAGIC EVENTS, DECLARING TODAY A DAY OF OFFICIAL MOURNING IN PROVINCE, AND CRITICIZING POLICE AUTHORITIES FOR HANDLING OF SITUATION. IT STILL UNCLEAR WHAT GROUPS MAY HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTS OF VANDALISM, VIOLENCE, ATTACKS ON PERSONAL AND PUBLIC PROPERTY, AND THROWING OF EXPLOSIVE DEVICES. HOWEVER, LABOR AND PRESS OBSERVERS COINCIDE IN JUDGEMENT THAT VITORIA HAS A FULL SHARE OF SMALL EXTREMIST GROUPS WHO HAVE HEAVILY INFILTRATED LOCAL LABOR SCENE. THEY CITE AS MOST ACTIVE MAOIST MCE, "CATHOLIC" EXTREMIST ORT, AND TROTSKYITE LCR WHICH HAS AN ALLIANCE WITH A SMALL DISSIDENT ETA GROUP KNOWN AS ETA SIXTH ASSEMBLY.

2. IN STRIKE SITUATION ELSEWHERE, PAMPLONA APPEARS TO BE STILL SHUT DOWN BY STRIKES, AND SOME OTHER MINOR INCIDENTS HAVE OCCURED IN OTHER PARTS OF BASQUE COUNTRY, ALTHOUGH MOST OBSERVERS STILL BELIEVE BASQUE SEPARATISM WAS NOT REALLY AN ISSUE IN VITORIA EVENTS. STRIKES ARE CONTINUING IN SOME OTHER AREAS, NOTABLY IN ASTURIAS MINING REGION AND IN VIGO. NATIONAL TRUCK DRIVERS STRIKE IS CONTINUING, BUT WITH CON-

SIDERABLY REDUCED INTENSITY, WITH SITUATION GRADUALLY MOVING BACK TOWARDS NORMALCY IN MADRID AND BARCELONA, LESS SO IN OUTLYING AREAS.

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PAGE 03 MADRID 01748 060730Z

3. CONVOCATION OF A GENERAL STRIKE IN FOUR BASQUE PROVINCES HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED FOR MONDAY, MARCH 8, IN SOLIDARITY WITH WORKERS KILLED IN VITORIA, AS WELL AS IN RELATION TO VARIOUS OTHER LONGSTANDING GRIEVANCES. ADDITIONALLY, MADRID METAL SECTOR, WHICH HAS BEEN BACK TO NORMAL DURING PAST FEW WEEKS, APPEARS TO BE HEATING UP AGAIN WITH RENEWED PROBLEMS AT THE 25,000 WORKER STANDARD ELECTRIC (ITT) PLANT.

4. IN ADDITION TO LABOR SITUATION, TWO TERRORIST ACTS, APPARENTLY PERPETRATED BY UNKNOWN RIGHTISTS, ARE ALSO CONTRIBUTING TO MAINTAINING TENSION. THESE ARE: A) KIDNAPPING MARCH 3 OF DIRECTOR OF "DOBLON", A LEFTIST WEEKLY MAGAZINE, BY FIVE UNKNOWN ASSAILANTS WHO FORCED HIM INTO A CAR, SPRAYED HIS FACE WITH PAINT, BEAT HIM, TOOK HIM FOR A NIGHT RIDE TO TOP OF A MOUNTAIN PASS, BEAT HIM AGAIN AND ABANDONED HIM, AFTER FORCING HIM TO SIGN A STATEMENT CONDEMNING "DOBLON'S" EDITORIAL LINE AND REPORTEDLY GIVING HIM THREE DAYS IN WHICH TO LEAVE SPAIN; AND B) A PACKAGE BOMB WHICH WAS RECEIVED IN MAIL THIS MORNING AT OFFICE OF "CAMBIO 16", SPAIN'S LEADING WEEKLY, WHICH FORTUNATELY DID NOT EXPLODE.

5. THE UNEASY CALM WILL BE TESTED BY MARCH 8 BASQUE GENERAL STRIKE EFFORT, AND PERHAPS A NATIONAL GENERAL STRIKE EFFORT LATER THIS MONTH, WHICH OBSERVERS NOW SAY IS BREWING. THE SALUTARY PRESS REACTION TO THESE EVENTS IS REPORTED SEPTEL. ADDITIONALLY, WE STILL HEAR THAT MILITARY COURT MARTIAL OF UMD JUNIOR OFFICERS MAY TAKE PLACE ON MONDAY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, GENERAL STRIKES, CIVIL DISORDERS, DEATHS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 MAR 1976
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MADRID01748
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760086-0057
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760391/aaaadcca.tel
Line Count: 137
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MADRID 1709
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAR 2004 by MartinML>; APPROVED <25 MAR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VITORIA STRIKE AFTERMATH-TERRORIST ACTIONS
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006